

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



Administrative Issuance: CFSA-06-15

TO: All CFSA Staff

FROM: Darlene Mansfield, Human Resources Administrator

DATE: July 14, 2006

RE: Children in the Workplace

The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) values its employees and their dedication to the children and families of the District of Columbia. CFSA is deeply concerned about the safety and health of its employees and all visitors to its facilities. While maintaining safe workspaces is a considerable challenge in itself, the task becomes even more difficult when children are brought on site. **Worksites are not designed for child safety, and serious exposures can arise if employees bring their children to work.**

The Agency is also concerned about liability issues related to its employees and its facilities, specifically having children in the workplace who are not in CFSA care. This is not to say that brief visits to the office should not be allowed. There may be those times when a spouse joins an employee for lunch and drops by for a moment with the children, or when an employee brings the new baby or grandchild for a brief introduction to fellow employees. Annual events such as the Take Your Child to Work Day and other similar activities provide opportunities for employees to share with their children what they do as government employees. The purpose of this issuance is to establish and implement guidelines regarding the presence of children in the workplace who are not in CFSA care.

In relation to this issuance, a “child” is defined as any person from birth to age 18 who is not in the care of CFSA. The “child” in the workplace is not limited to the children of the employee. This issuance also includes, but is not limited to, a family member of the employee, a neighbor, or a child otherwise in the care of the CFSA employee.

If there are questions regarding this Administrative Issuance, please contact the Human Resources Administration at 202.724.7373.

Guidelines

The presence of employees’ children in the workplace is not conducive to a productive and safe work environment. Each employee should be considerate of his/her co-workers and ensure proper childcare arrangements are made, to include alternate arrangements in case the primary arrangements are cancelled at the last minute. Employees should not bring their children into the workplace on an extended or regular basis.

1. Below are a number of exposures that can occur if children are brought into the workplace:
 - a. Injury from some physical aspect in the workplace (paper shredders, boxes falling, standing in swivel chairs, etc.)

- b. Injury to an employee who trips over or slips on objects a child places on the floor, or even from tripping over the child
 - c. Distractions that prevent an employee's full concentration on the job, thus affecting productivity or service
 - d. Additional responsibilities during emergency evacuation, "shelter in place", or other emergency actions in government buildings
2. However, a child's presence in the workplace may be permitted in emergency situations and under the circumstances listed below:
- a. **Community Service Requirement:** The child is an approved volunteer who works for CFSA to meet a community service requirement sponsored by his or her high school
 - b. **CFSA-approved Events:** The child is participating in a CFSA-approved event such as "Take Your Child to Work Day".
 - c. **CFSA-sponsored Events:** The child is participating in a CFSA-sponsored event that his or her immediate family member, who is a CFSA staff member, is attending.
 - d. **Commitment During or After School:** The child needs to meet an immediate family member, who is a CFSA staff member, during or after school hours to attend to a personal matter that may include, but is not limited to, attending a doctor's appointment.
3. In cases described above in section 2 (a-d), the CFSA employee shall inform his or her immediate supervisor and next level supervisor, in advance of the date, that the child will be in the workplace, including how long the child will be present.
4. When there is an emergency, the CFSA employee shall inform his or her immediate supervisor (or next level supervisor if the immediate supervisor is unavailable) immediately upon arrival at work that the child is in the workplace. Each case is evaluated and approval may be granted by the immediate supervisor (or next level supervisor if the immediate supervisor is unavailable) on a case-by-case basis. Children should only be in the workplace for a short period of time, i.e., no more than one hour.
5. When a CFSA employee brings a child to work, that staff person shall assume responsibility for the child, including
- a. being personally responsible for the child's behavior and safety while on District government property;
 - b. ensuring that the child does not use government property or equipment, except as consistent with the child's community service under section 2(a) above; and
 - c. being prepared to immediately remove the child from the workplace if it is determined that the child is disruptive or poses a risk to the Agency.